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DRAFT - 8 May 57

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Nathan F. Twining
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force
Washington 25, D.C.

SUBJECT : Plans for AQUATONE/OILSTONE After Present
Operational Season

1. It is highly desirable to start planning at this time either for the winding up of AQUATONE/OILSTONE after the present photographic season or for its continuation, probably in somewhat modified form thereafter. At the 6 May meeting on this Project we received some guidance on this matter in the form of two statements which were substantially as follows:

First, that when there is evidence that the Soviets have developed a capability successfully to intercept the U-2 aircraft, which will presumably not be before the end of the current photographic season, this Agency should turn over the equipment currently employed in this Project to the Air Force to be added to the military U-2 capability being developed by SAC.

Second, that so long as the U-2 is used for overflight purposes in peacetime, these activities should be organized as non-military operations.

2. If I have currently interpreted this guidance, it raises two questions which I believe we can resolve without further reference at this time to higher authority. First, can we reasonably anticipate that the

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equipment we are now using will retain its substantial immunity to hostile action through another season? Second, if so, should a nonmilitary overflight capability employing this equipment be kept in being for another season?

3. As to the first of these questions, it is our tentative view that the U-2 will probably retain a high degree of safety from interception through the 1958 season, especially if the RAINBOW development turns out to be reasonably effective.

4. The answer to the second question depends not only on an estimate of Soviet interception capability but also on a judgment as to the probable willingness of our political authorities to allow overflights to be made under cold war conditions. It is my own view that if limited operations can be conducted this summer without serious diplomatic repercussions, and more especially if the effectiveness of the RAINBOW program is demonstrated, there is a good chance that at least limited operations will be permitted next year. Even if this view is optimistic, there is always the possibility that one of several things may happen to render overflights politically acceptable: The political climate may change in such a way as to reduce the risk inherent in such operations; a situation may arise in which there is an urgent need for intelligence on the USSR; or local situations may require reconnaissance of areas such as the Middle East where risk of detection and political action are less. For these reasons I believe the likelihood that U-2 overflights will be required and permitted is sufficiently

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great so that we should at this time plan to maintain it through 1958. In the light of the above-quoted guidance, I assume it should be maintained as a non-military operation as at present.

5. This general conclusion leads me to make the following specific proposals:

- a. That for planning purposes a provisional decision be made at this time to maintain the AQUATONE/OILSTONE capability through 1958 but if possible on a somewhat reduced scale.
- b. That this decision be reviewed no later than September 1957 on the basis of: The progress of RAINBOW, experience with operations during the summer, and any new evidence available concerning Soviet interception capabilities.
- c. That AQUATONE/OILSTONE be conducted in such a way as to require an absolute minimum of interference with the SAC U-2 program.
- d. That the political authorities be advised of plans for the maintenance of a U-2 capability in non-military hands and that this matter be discussed on the occasion of the next meeting to which authority is sought to undertake additional operations.

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